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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 003974

SIPDIS

FOR NEA/ARPI AND PRM/MCE; GENEVA FOR CAMPBELL AND CASSIDY

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [KU](#) [ICRC](#)

SUBJECT: SWISS AMBASSADOR MAKING ROUNDS ON MAGEN DAVID ADOM MEMBERSHIP; SEEKS U.S. ASSISTANCE IN KUWAIT AND QATAR

REF: A. KUWAIT 3720 (NOTAL)

- [B](#). STATE 149915
- [C](#). KUWAIT 3023 (NOTAL)
- [D](#). KUWAIT 2728 (NOTAL)
- [E](#). KUWAIT 942 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Swiss Ambassador to Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, Jean-Phillipe Tissieres, called on the Ambassador on September 7 to brief him on Swiss plans to secure support from Arab and Muslim states for the September 11 consultations in Geneva, and the subsequent October conference, on adopting the Third Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions to facilitate entry of the Magen David Adom (MDA) society into the Red Cross/Crescent Movement. In the absence of the Foreign Minister and Under Secretary, he said he would meet later in the day with International Organizations Department Director Abdullah Al-Murad to press for GOK approval of a new emblem. (Comment: In separate meetings with the Ambassador and PolChief, Al-Murad feigned ignorance about the status of MDA with regard to Red Cross/Crescent membership. End Comment.) Tissieres said the GOS was convinced that a majority of countries favored adopting a new emblem, but they hid behind the Arab League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the Gulf Cooperation Council so that they would not have to stake out an independent position. He told the Ambassador that most Arab and Muslim states have not/not directly opposed the initiative and the GOS hoped the consultative conference would force them to clarify their positions, commenting, "We want to trap them." He further explained he was calling on MFA officials in Kuwait and Qatar as capitals that had been more supportive of the conferences and emblem change than have their missions in Geneva and New York. He would also encourage the ministries to issue appropriate instructions to their delegations. He said that inconsistencies between capitals and missions on the issue compelled him to "get out of the wood" and actively engage the Kuwaitis and Qataris.

[1](#)2. (C) Tissieres added that the Arab-Muslim argument that it was not a good time to discuss emblem changes was weak. He said there was never a good time and opined that had the contracting parties waited for the right time, the Red Cross/Crescent would not now exist. He said he would argue the merits of the emblem change, focus on the goals of the Red Cross/Crescent Movement, and try to avoid Arab-Israeli political issues. (Note: Tissieres offered his personal criticism of the emblem stalemate saying the real problem stemmed from the Ottoman Empire decision to permit use of the crescent, which politicized and added religious overtones to what was intended to be a neutral, secular body. Had the red cross, the reverse of the Swiss flag, remained the sole symbol of the humanitarian movement, countries would not seek to add national or religious insignia. End Note.) He told the Ambassador he would remind the Gulf states that the Red Cross/Crescent Movement was not an organization of countries, but rather of contracting parties, and lack of participation in the September and October meetings would not halt progress if the majority of attendees supported adopting the protocol.

[1](#)3. (C) In response to Tissieres' request that the U.S. approach the GOK on the September and October conferences, but without giving the appearance of U.S.-Swiss collaboration, the Ambassador advised him of the demarches delivered (reftels) and the active role the U.S. has played.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: Tissieres is off to a late start and his efforts are unlikely to prompt the GOK to take a visible, independent position on the Third Additional Protocol. End Comment.

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